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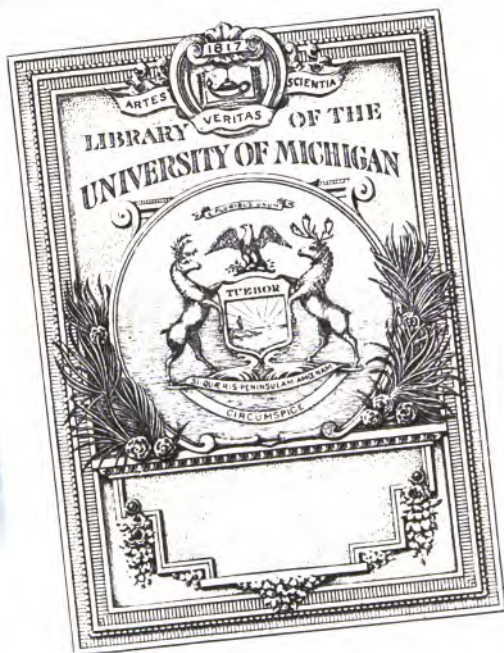
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THE
Last SPEECH
OF THE
ARIANS, &c.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1912

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1912

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE
Last S P E E C H
OF THE
A R I A N S,

As deliver'd in

The MONTHLY REVIEW;

WITH

Some REMARKS upon it, the *Appeal to Common
Sense, &c. &c.*

To which are prefix'd,

Some curious Reflections on RELIGION;

A L S O,

A very useful Invention; which, for the Ease and Benefit
of such as intend entering into Holy Orders, is now first
made publick.

By a L A Y M A N.

L O N D O N:

Printed for M. COOPER. at the *Globe* in *Pater-noster-Row*.

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SOME CURIOUS

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Present State of RELIGION.

12-9-49 2/35
HAVING lately brought the Parson of our parish, who is a good sort of an inoffensive man in his way, home to dine with me; the cloth being removed, and a chearful glass going round, to promote digestion; our conversation, after buzzing over various subjects, at length, by some unforeseen accident, turn'd upon Religion: when the Parson, having lighted his pipe, began to enlarge upon the little regard paid to it, and its ministers, in these days.

I can very easily foresee, said he, giving his head two or three very melancholy and heavy shakes, that the time is at hand, when we shall not have even the least shew of Religion remaining among us: For when the laity put their heads together to rob, and commit all sorts of injustice upon, nay, I may say, to starve, the upholders of it; where is there the least room to doubt of its fate? And this I myself know to be but too true, from sad experience. For altho' my predecessor had good 200*l. per annum*, as well paid him as any tythes in *England*; yet his parishioners, who retain'd some remains of primitive piety, considering what a little way that would go to support his family, buy useful and godly books, and decent cloathing; us'd annually to send him in provisions, in such quantities, as serv'd not only his family, but also generally produced a sum of near twenty pounds yearly, by sending the superfluities to market: And this his widow has told me an hundred times over.

But alas! Sir! those good times, those days of plenty and piety, are now no more: For, wou'd you think it, my people begin to grumble, not a little, at paying me my bare tythe; and unless I preach a sermon, for the purpose, against

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the horrid sin of covetousness, or the like, I seldom see a fat pig or fowl come within my doors. But, continued he, I am, in some sort, even with them; for I proportion the goodness of my sermons to their deserts; and am resolved to continue this practice till they become deserving of better; unless I once a year, or so, compliment 'quire *Modely* with one; which, however, to say the truth, requires but very little reading to compose. For he has frequently declared to me his great antipathy to five different sorts of discourses; viz. 1. Such as declaim against certain vices; because the world is, as yet, divided in its opinions on what particular inclination or action to stamp the name of virtue, or vice. So that, until that matter be fairly decided, he thinks it wou'd be dangerous to handle such subjects in a pulpit; lest the preacher shou'd be found to be labouring to depreciate, perhaps, some of the most amiable virtues, while he imagined that he was acting against vice. 2. Such as treat of mysteries in Religion, about which he should concern himself but little; if the preacher did not frequently pretend to more penetration than all his hearers, and seem'd as if he thought them all a pack of dolts, and blockheads, or else strove to make them so; therefore not to be endured. 3. Those that contain quotations from the Scripture; for these are pedantick. 4. Long ones; for many reasons: But, chiefly, because they generally incline people to sleep, in a cold uncomfortable pue; who thereby become liable to catch dangerous colds: For which reason, he terms these deadly discourses. 5. Those that threaten certain frightful punishments in some other world; for very good reasons, which he did not chuse to mention.

Nay, but parson, reply'd I, I cannot help observing to you, that your method is very far from being right. You ought rather, by laboured and pathetick discourses, to set your people's errors before their eyes; and rouse them to their duty towards God, as well as man. But it may be, that indolence, or somewhat else, will not permit you to display your talents and learning as vigorously as the occasion requires.

Why, really, since I must say it, return'd he, it is so long since I concern'd myself in writing, having, for some years past, given up my flock to their own reprobate hearts; that I believe I shou'd, at this period of time, find some difficulty to persuade myself to enter on such a task. Besides, I am convinced, it wou'd be just so much loss of time
and

and labour; both which I can employ to more advantage, and with better success, in managing my domestick affairs.

Oh! if that be all, said I, I shall soon remove your chief objections, without any prejudice to your more immediate concerns.

What wou'd you think, if I shou'd procure others, to undergo the drudgery of studying and writing for you. I have got two volumes of discourses in the house, which you may have home with you; and I can tell you, that they bring with them two advantages in your favour, which you can very rarely meet with in one work. For, 1. They must certainly have been wrote by a pious good man, with great strength of understanding, learning, and clearness of stile: And, 2. They are in the hands of very few, I believe, as yet. So that you need make no scruple to borrow an entire sermon from them, without any danger of your being call'd to an account for it. Their titles are, *Discourses, controversial and practical, on various subjects, proper for the consideration of the present times. By the author of Deism Revealed.* May I ever be stil'd plain parson Pliant, said he, if those be not the very books which I heard so sadly maul'd, the last Sunday I din'd with the 'squire.— Oh! Sir, you'll excuse me, I cou'd not.—Why, said I, I thought the 'squire never read such books. But, pr'y'thee, be so good as to inform me what was objected to the work?

It is true, return'd he, that the 'squire seldom or never buys the entire works of any author; for that, he says, is unnecessary; when he can not only have a fair judgment pass'd on the several periodical works, but also their best thoughts, arguments, &c. handsomely abridg'd, in the *Magazines, or Monthly Review.* It was out of one of the latter, for last January, that he read to us the criticism upon the book you mention'd; which took the author, and his work, all to pieces; and that, too, with vast ease, and in a few words. For the reviewers first sat out by affirming, that the author was a ranter; and then brought in all their arguments to prove, that the discourses were the production of a ranter.

Pray, said I, did they not first convict the author of being a ranter, by solid proofs. No, no, reply'd he; they seem'd to lay that down as one of their grand axioms. Immediately after they had read the title, and understood the author's design, by dipping into the preface. Can you

recollect none of their arguments, said I? Why, really, return'd he, lest I shou'd be guilty of telling an untruth, I must confess, that I do not remember to have heard what I cou'd call a rational one throughout the whole; but the 'squire, and the rest of his company, laugh'd so loud, and seem'd to be so fully satisfy'd of the truth of their assertions, and strength of their arguing; that I concluded, such had escap'd my hearing.

Well, notwithstanding what you have heard against it, said I, I wou'd recommend it to you as a very good work, and well worth your perusing, in these critical times. No, reply'd he, I will have nothing to do with it: For shou'd I attempt to preach any of his discourses, which are term'd polemical, I shou'd most assuredly forfeit the esteem and patronage of my good friend the 'squire. And as for my own private information, I think I have already read enough, were I to be made a bishop to-morrow. Here the parson gave a great yawn, and immediately after fell into an agreeable and sound sleep; which put an end to our conversation.

After what I had heard, I cou'd not be easy, until I wrote to *London*, and had the *Monthly Review*, for last January, sent to me. After reading it, and finding with what injustice and scurrility the reviewers had treated the author, and his performance; I apply'd to several clergyman, of my acquaintance, to undertake the answering of it; thereby to do justice, not only to the work, but to the publick also, which has been so grossly impos'd upon by the artful insinuations of the reviewers. But one excus'd himself, by telling me, that he was then engag'd in finishing a piece, which he intended to have acted, this season, at one of the theatres; therefore begg'd I wou'd apply to some one else, more at leisure. Another assur'd me, that, for two years before, he had not look'd into a book; because nothing impair'd the sight so much as reading: But, he said, he wou'd take care that it shou'd not affect his eyes.

I apply'd, next, to one with whom I was extremely intimate. Being told that he was in his study, I went directly, without any farther ceremony, push'd open the door, and found him, as I thought, very busy in shuffling a pack of cards. He at first seem'd to be in some confusion; but perceiving it was only his friend that had surpris'd him, he soon recover'd himself; and, after some compliments pass'd,

pass'd, on my attempting to retire, he made me sit down and began as follows :

I am sensible that your surprize must be great, at seeing me employ'd after such a manner : But, lest you shou'd put a worse construction on it than it deserves, I will discover to you, no unimportant secret, provided you promise to keep it inviolably. Upon my engaging so to do, he proceeded : You must know, then, said he, that, of all things, I detest the slavish practice of sifting the learned dust of antiquity, in order to collect materials for a sermon ; and yet, if a person will not give himself this trouble frequently, his discourses will be so few in number, unless he comes by them dishonestly, that his hearers will soon cry out against him. Now, as it has always run in my head, that some more expeditious method of compiling sermons, than has hitherto been thought of, might be projected ; I cou'd not rest, till I set about a scheme that I had for a long time meditated on, and which, I may say, I have, at length, almost happily effected. You see here, said he, are fifty-two pieces of paper, or you may call them cards, if you please : At the head of each of these is wrote a text of the most general application that I cou'd meet with throughout my Concordance ; and underneath is a short discourse, so judiciously proportion'd, that the last sentence of it will catch at any of my texts, without any other inconnection being perceiv'd, but what may easily be dispens'd with. Moreover, continu'd he, these sermons are so artfully contriv'd, that they may serve almost at all times, and be as well receiv'd several ages hence, as at this present time. He then took up his pack, and said, you shall now see, whether my time was well spent, or not. To produce a new discourse, I have nothing more to do, but to shuffle them every Sunday morning ; only observing to keep my last Sunday's text under my thumb thus, which must be put at the bottom. Then he began to handle them in such a manner, as plainly shew'd him to be an adept in more than one science. This done, he told me I don't know how many thousand changes of sermons he cou'd produce by this method ; ay, almost innumerable. He added farther, that he had, but the last Sunday, ventur'd to make trial of his art, for the first time ; which had all the success he expected, except in one or two places there seem'd somewhat like a disagreement in some of his texts ; which wou'd take him up some time to correct. Though he had good reason to suppose these little inaccuracies

accuracies had escap'd the notice of his congregation, as one half of them was in a sound sleep, and the other so engag'd in private parties of chit-chat, that they seem'd attentive to nought beside. Finding that he had already sufficient employment on his hands, I took my leave of him; extolling his invention greatly. And now, I hope, he will excuse me for venturing, contrary to my promise, to make it publick; as I consider'd it to be a secret of too general use to be kept private any longer: And as to my readers, I am sure of meeting with their thanks, for the innocent freedom I have taken with my friend.

I afterwards went to a fourth person of my acquaintance, but he was just going post to *London*, to bespeak his patron's interest, in favour of his promotion to a rich living in his neighbourhood; the present possessor of it being then given over by his physicians. Tir'd with these disappointments, I at length determin'd to undertake the work myself; finding that others, more capable of executing it, had other more weighty employments on their hands. In consequence of which, I wrote the following Remarks, which I here present you with.

THE
Last S P E E C H
OF THE
A R I A N S, &c.

PERHAPS it may not be deem'd unnecessary, before I bring my readers to judge of the merits of the remarks made by the reviewers, to lay before them such qualifications as all persons, who take upon themselves the characters of universal judges of literature, which is the office assum'd by the reviewers, are suppos'd to possess in the highest perfection; to enable them to act, in such an employment, with applause. And let me tell these gentlemen, that the place, which they have usurp'd, is not made to fit every one that can scold and scribble; as they vainly endeavour, by their elaborate works, to persuade the publick.

For, to execute such an office as it ought, requires not only a thorough skill in all the learned and polite languages, but also a consummate mastery in all the branches of knowledge. For how, without this, can any persons pretend to criticize upon all the labours of learned men, on the labours of those who gave, each of them, great parts, perhaps, and a whole life, to one branch, nay, it may be, to one subject.

In the next place, this office requires absolutely the most inviolable impartiality; so that those who assume it, whatever their own opinions or preconceptions may be, shou'd never shew them in such a work, nor suffer them to tincture, in the least, what they write; which if they despise, or neglect to observe, they not only do injustice to their authors, but also to the publick: For it is not their own private opinion or prejudices that their readers are inquisitive after, but those of their authors. Such writers set up to be the historians of literature, and, consequently, of controversy,

versy, whether political, religious, &c. and therefore, as writers, should be of no party; should represent the arguments, on both sides, fair and incorrupt; and should seldom or never say, this is a strong, or this is a weak, argument: Or, when they do, shou'd give the *strong* to the argument of one who opposes their own private opinions; and the *weak*, to one who seconds them; with equal readiness. If they commend only what is for, and blame what is against, their own side, and do not even assign one good reason for their censure, or applause; they will soon be consider'd, not as party writers only, but as ignorant scribblers; and writing for bigots, will be read only by such. For if they are not able, either through want of judgment, or candour, to see reason when it is against, and sophistry when it is for, themselves; they are very unfit to judge and taste for other men. But, above all, they ought to refrain from personal reflections, scurrilous and abusive language; which must reflect equally upon every reader, who shall unluckily happen to be of their author's opinion, and opposite to theirs; as upon the abus'd author himself. Admitting that their author hath provok'd them to it, by opposing some troublesome arguments to their favourite or modish opinion; and yet farther, even supposing they can answer them in no other manner; yet still it must, and will, be deem'd unpardonable, in any others. But the celebrated authors of the *Journal des Trevoux*, who were allow'd all sorts of liberties by the publick, whom I shou'd be sorry to see my *Journalists* or *Reviewers* of this nation copy after.

Now if the review of the *discourses* in question be compar'd with these rules, it will evidently appear, that the writers were either ignorant where the force of the arguments lay, by their singling out such passages as have least of argument in them; or that they did so on purpose to turn the reader's curiosity into a contempt for the *discourses*; from a view only of such passages, which, though mutilated and mangled in such a manner as they judg'd cou'd do the author least honour, they pretend, as their readers might well expect, are the author's strongest arguments in support of his tenets. In a word, they profess themselves Arians; and endeavour, by panegyricks, to advance every Arian work; and employ censures, and every low art, to keep every orthodox work, of any weight, as much out of sight as possible.

As I am not a divine, and but very little conversant in such a method of arguing, as the publishers of the Review have therein introduced, I ought, perhaps, to decline making any observations upon it. But though I am only a layman, yet I am an orthodox Christian; hoping messieurs the Reviewers will pardon the obsoleteness and coarseness of the expression; and, authoriz'd by so glorious a title, how deficient soever I may be, in point of critical altercation, I will venture on the talk.

These gentlemen, at first setting out, in order to convey a just idea of these *Discourses* to their readers, as they pleas'd to say, though they soon after discover other motives, transcribe a part of the preface to the first volume; wherein the author makes an apology for the defects of his *Discourses*, and for venturing to publish them. But the objections to which his work may be liable, he says, he hopes will be sufficiently ballanced, not only by the goodness of his intention; and the variety of new arguments introduced in them; but, also, by the perspicuity and conciseness wherewith he hath endeavour'd to draw together the lights necessary for the illustration and proof of each controverted fundamental, which are either too much dissipated, or obscur'd; by terms of art, and prolixer reasonings, of abler, but more voluminous controvertists. And, farther, that it is his chief aim finally to decide, if possible, the debates under each important topick, to the satisfaction of every truly candid inquirer, &c.

What remarks do our *Reviewers* make upon this? "Why, say they, upon reading this, we expected to find the subjects, our author treats of, discuss'd in a very satisfactory way; great conciseness and perspicuity in his method of illustrating them, and a variety of new arguments urged in support of the fundamental articles of our faith. But after perusing his *Discourses*, with due attention, our expectations were much disappointed: He has advanced little that is new, and that little not much to the purpose." Observe by what pretty gradations they rise to the very summit of their good breeding, their sublimity in style, and their criticism; "His manner is neither concise, nor perspicuous; his style is rugged, and he is, withal, dogmatical, and arrogant." This is, however, in my opinion, a very rugged sort of criticism. To which they add only a short, but very important quotation, from their late pious St. *John*. But, as it is no way material to be

be inserted here, I shall take notice of it in another place. The reader must observe, that they display, in the very beginning, great justice; in condemning their author, before he is allow'd to make any defence.

It must be very evident, to every reader, that the *Reviewers* would never have made use of such language, supposing them capable of speaking any other, had they not very good cause for it. They seem also, I think, to be not a little angry, but on what account they have not thought proper fully to explain to us. Perhaps, indeed, they were ashamed to own the truth: Be that as it may, they have left us such a clue, as will very easily lead us into the gloomy recesses of their hearts, without much trouble.

And, to this purpose, first let me ask—Supposing that the author had treated the subjects of his *Discourses*, even as they have taken upon themselves, falsely, to affirm; without observing that perspicuity and conciseness, or fail'd to introduce that variety of new arguments, which they had expected; when, it must be evident to the most prejudiced person, that the same man was, at that time, exerting all his feeble powers, to the utmost, to endeavour to bear up Christianity, now become half a ruin, by the falling of its pillars; while it is scarce supported by those which remain standing; and the enraged storms, returning with redoubled fury and noise, threaten to shake its very foundations, and already eccho in its most sacred places; what though, in the midst of this his well-intended and arduous labour, some few instances of human weakness shou'd be discover'd in him; wou'd any Christian, or friend to Christianity, publickly abuse and rail at him, upon no other account? My readers, I hope, will spare me the trouble of drawing a consequence from this, while I proceed.

Again; if the author's arguments, as they chiefly tend to vindicate the fundamental articles of the Christian Religion, were weak, ill founded, and did not carry conviction in their train; his criticks, who, I am sorry to say it, shew themselves to be no friends to that Religion which the author labours to support; would, surely, have no cause to be out of temper: Nay, so long as they cou'd have entertain'd the least hope to oppose his arguments and proofs, by others equally strong, in defence of their own opinions; they must have remain'd perfectly good-humour'd, and wou'd never have been reduced to offer such arguments as they do, in support of their tenets. But if my readers shou'd not think them

them much to the purpose, I may venture to assure them, that the *Reviewers* are altogether excusable for it; since, if they cou'd have found better, they wou'd not have thus flown to their last resort, in such cases. So that, I think, the whole affair is unravell'd. For it appears plain, that it was the consciousness of their own poverty that made them take it into their heads to grow angry, that they might, with a better grace, swagger, strut about, and look big; and manfully stalk over whole arguments upon a few sturdy polysyllables. Thus we see merchants never make so great a parade, or vaunt so much of their wealth, as when they are just upon the brink of ruin, and bankruptcy.

Let us now examine, more particularly, upon what grounds they characterize the author with the genteel epithets, dogmatical, arrogant; and farther charge him with the want of conciseness, perspicuity, &c.

I flatter myself, that every reader, who hath perus'd the *Discourses*, will agree with me, that the author, as an honest and good Christian, prejudiced in favour of nought but the truth, hath done all in his power to search out and bring to light such matters as he judg'd were necessary to the happiness of his fellow-creatures: And if, in the course of his inquiry, he met with all the evidences of truth and demonstration, on one side, suing for positive conclusions; while, on the other, error appear'd, with nothing else to support her claim, but rage, clamour, and deformity; would it not have argu'd but too much of scepticism, to have remain'd doubtful, or diffident, in such circumstances! And how cou'd he have answer'd, for such a conduct, to God, or to his fellow Christians? However, if the criticks will be so good-natur'd as to point out where he is positive, without having assign'd sufficient cause, in his *Discourses*, for his being so; which they have not once attempted, as yet, to shew; I shall, then, freely yield him up to their censure.

Their next charge seems, indeed, to be much better founded; wherefore I shall not attempt to vindicate the author of it; but will rather openly confess, that I think he was very *arrogant*, and even rude, if they please, not only to propose ugly, unpolite, crabbed questions; but that he shou'd also call upon honest gentlemen to answer them; without considering whether they were so dispos'd, or capable of doing so. In short, I am of opinion, that he cou'd have us'd them no worse, if, after having strongly bolted all

the doors and windows of his house, he shou'd have given them an invitation to come in, and welcome.

Neither are they much astray, in objecting to his conscientiousness: For it is certain, that half the arguments, and proofs, which he alledges in his *Discourses*, in defence of the orthodox faith; might have been sufficient to have induced every candid inquirer after truth to have approv'd his opinions: And as to his perspicuity, I think he shews, that he can speak neither clearer, nor plainer, than the holy Scriptures: But this wou'd be excusable in him, if he did not most presumptuously insinuate, that no person whatever can express himself so as to be more easily understood.

The *Reviewers* say, that they were very much disappointed in their expectations, upon reading these *Discourses*, not to meet in them a variety of new arguments in support of the fundamental articles of *their faith*. This disappointment was truly scarce to be borne with patience, if they ever entertain'd hopes that the author of *Deism Revealed* wou'd take up his pen in their favour. Perhaps the title of his works might have occasion'd this their unlucky disappointment; viz. *Discourses suited to the present Times*. For might they not have very well expected, from books said to be drawn up in that taste, something that wou'd have chim'd in with them in opinion; and that the publisher had only cunningly advertis'd the publick, that they were wrote by the author of *Deism Revealed*, in order to blindfold those who, otherwise, might never have look'd into them? But if they intended saying, that there was nothing new urged in vindication of the fundamentals of the orthodox faith: I answer, Perhaps, because they never read enough to know what is old. For nothing else but this, or a low shift to serve their party by publishing falsehoods, cou'd have induced them to say so. And in order to convince my readers of the truth of this assertion, and the baseness and dissingenuity of theirs; I have been at some pains to collect the following evidences, for that purpose.

The very next paragraph to the *Reviewer's* first quotation from the fourth *Discourse**, and the next to that, apply'd to *Christ* in the sixth *Discourse*†, both contain new matter. Although the *Reviewers* cou'd dwell upon others, so very near to them, without seeming to have taken the least notice of them; as if they had here, as well as

* Vol. I. p. 82. &c.

† P. 145.

through-

throughout the whole course of their *Review*, purposely kept one of their eyes close shut, while the other stood staring. As many of these instances of their ingenuity would not appear well, in the body of this piece; I must refer my readers to the bottom of the page; where they will find the page, and the paragraph, pointing to a variety of new matter*. But I must observe, in this place, that the plan of the fifteenth *Discourse*, Vol. I. from whence all the reasonings therein result, is entirely new; and, also, that the seventeenth is altogether new. It is true, that, in 1751, a pamphlet was publish'd, in *Scotland*, to much the same effect; but it was, probably, taken from what the author of the *Discourses* had, in 1748, set forth in his *Deism Revealed*†. These I only give as specimens; whereby, if any one shall be persuaded to read over the entire work, I will engage, that he will find a great variety of other observations, and reasonings, which he never met with before, interspers'd through every *Discourse*; as well as many more instances of the *Reviewers* prejudiced and unsupported assertions.

I shall now consider their last charge against their author: But here, I do confess, I cannot tell how to appear in his vindication. For his style is, undoubtedly, of such a kind, on some occasions, as must make it seem very *rugged*, and disagreeable, to persons of *good breeding*. And must say, that, in this respect, he is far short of shewing that commendable politeness, which a certain well-bred divine display'd once in the royal chapel; who, being in the pulpit, and just about to send a parcel of poor, low-bred, bigotted mechanicks and tradesmen (for, to be sure, decency would not allow him to lay hold on any others), a packing to a very ungentle place; he gave them a short reprieve, while he made an apology to his audience for bringing them even within conception of such a place: And assur'd them, that he would never presume to mention so vulgar and *rugged* an expression, within their hearing. These, I remember, were his very words. Now our author acts quite the contrary; which may be owing to his reading too much of the Scriptures, which are wrote in a very unpolite and rugged style. sure enough; as has often been complain'd of. For I see he makes no apology, nor does he even put his *polite read-*

*. Page 163. Parag. *And while I was doing this*, &c. P. 175. par. *Pray now*, &c. P. 179, 189. P. 216. parag. *Long as I see*, as far as p. 222. P. 243. parag. *Howsoever we*, &c. P. 255, 256. P. 260, to 262. Many new things in *Discourse XI.* particularly p. 294, 295, 297, 298, &c. &c.

† Vol. II. p. 14

on their guard, before he shocks their ears, nay, even their very reason, with an hereafter, hell, fire, brimstone, &c. and such-like harsh-sounding words; which he cou'd learn no-where else so patly as from the Scriptures. Tho' I am convinced, if the government wou'd permit some of our *refin'd geniuses* to give a new translation of the Bible, which they have long labour'd for; they wou'd carefully weed out of it all such obsolete; or, rather, corrupt words. So that, if the author wou'd take a little of my advice, when he publishes any thing for the future entertainment of people of taste; he wou'd do well to endeavour to amend his harsh stile. But, though I will not pretend to justify the author, in this respect; yet, from the specimen which these criticks have given us of their own, I shou'd be sorry, and so wou'd many others beside me, to see them publish a new edition of the author's works, corrected by them, and translated into their own language.

As the *Reviewers* have clos'd the first part of their Remarks with the words and authority of a great and noble author; I imagine, that I can do no less than endeavour to imitate so good an example. Having, therefore, chosen my lord *Æsop*, the celebrated philosopher and historian of antiquity, for my champion; I will conclude this article with observing, that as often as these gentlemen assume the tremendous character of censors, so often do I call to mind his famous treatise on the *Pleasure and advantage of travelling with one's fingers in their eyes, or in the dark*; and cannot, for my very life, help thinking of his ass, dreadfully disguis'd in a lion's skin; and imagine that I hear him fart—g, and braying terror all around; until, by the over-violent shaking and distorting of himself, the skin falls off; at sight of which, the poor affrighted ass trots away, with all speed, to secrete himself in the most gloomy and dark retreats.

In the next place, the *Reviewers* just recite the subjects of the three first *Discourses* in the first volume of the author's works; and quote a very short passage, from *The proofs of the unity of God*, in the fourth; but without obliging their readers with any of their curious remarks upon it: Yet I cou'd easily perceive, that they pretended to have a good deal of meaning, at least, in their faces; and affected being thought queer arch dogs, for having so sily quoted from their author; and impos'd, as they flatter'd themselves, a conclusion, drawn from a long chain of arguments, upon their
readers,

readers, as a specimen of the author's best reasoning, and soundest and clearest arguments.

They proceed next, to the fifth and sixth *Discourses*, of which they make little more than bare recitals, and thence pass to the seventh, which proves the divinity of the Holy Ghost; from this they quote the third proof, urged in support of this divinity, that is to say, from the divine worship prescribed, and paid to him in the Holy Scriptures.

Here they seem, indeed, to begin with a sort of triumph, by crying out, *Hear him!* a phrase which I have often heard has been known to have claimed the victory, and sole merit of many a long and doubtful argument; for it is said, frequently, to produce the same effect on the person at whom it is pointed, as did *Medusa's* head in old times; which, by at once turning an adversary into a statue or stone, preserved the stout hero, that had it in his possession, from the danger and disgrace of receiving many plaguy kicks on the breech, and sound thwacks on the ribs, from his enemy. But to return, this they pronounced in such an emphatical manner, as if they had really intended no less than the entire ruin of their unfortunate author; so that I was impatient for the end of their quotation, and in no little dread, expecting to encounter whole files of important objections, 'remarks, arguments, &c. just only to put the author the sooner out of pain; but, it seems, they judg'd it would be more prudent to muster all these together in one grand and invincible body; which, however, contains no more than, "*This is an easy way of getting over a difficult culty, and is, no doubt, very perspicuous and satisfactory.*" Alas, poor gentlemen!—they must certainly have been in a very desperate and distracted situation, when, instead of offending their adversary, they turn'd the edge of their own weapons against themselves. I am surpriz'd, when they found themselves so hardly pinch'd, that they did not add a note, referring for *further proof of what they say* to their learn'd criticism on the preface. Oh, poor Arianism!—is it come to this at last?

We will now follow them to the eighth *Discourse*, wherein the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is vindicated, from whence they select two or three passages, to which they prefix a short preface, or sentence; but, as it differs neither in spirit nor Language, from what they have already shewn to be their standard in both; and, as I have reason to imagine, that they rather intended this humorous flou-

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with to silence or deafen a certain impertinent friend of theirs, called Conscience, than with any view to satisfy the publick ; I shall not trouble my readers with it here, but will leave it to themselves to enjoy the sole benefit of its operations.

In these detached passages there are, however, unluckily convey'd some reasonings, deduc'd from abundance of proofs before produced, not easy to be ridicul'd, unless the holy Scriptures are brought in for a share of it, for they make it evident, that unless we deny the grand axiom of Christianity, viz. that the Scriptures are the word of God, and, as such, implicitly to be believ'd ; and, further, presume to deny the veracity of God, and to prefer and set up our own reason, so liable to mistake, in its most simple and familiar judgments of things, in a matter confessedly above its view, in opposition to his word and affirmation ; we must not pretend to require of God any other evidence for the truth of what he himself affirms of his own unity, as also the divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, but his bare word ; and that he has often done so, the author hath given sufficient demonstration in his *Discourses* upon those subjects, yet, after all, every particular of this is considered only as *extravagant rant*.

The latter part of their quotation seems, in a peculiar manner, to be levelled at themselves ; for, there, the author observes, that although many able writers have by clear and demonstrative arguments, proved the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, yet those who pretend to oppose them in it, produce nothing on their side, but little poultry nibbling trifles, while they leave the arguments of these unnoticed, as if such had never been once suggested.

They must have found themselves mightily embarrass'd for a reply to what they had so imprudently ridicul'd and quoted ; but art and cunning, being set to work in their service, soon provide them an answer ; or, rather, as they might well imagine, that their readers wou'd expect they shou'd assign some sort of grounds for their ridicule, which they cou'd not conveniently come at, with a stratagem, which enables them to evade their readers inquiries, for their quotation is no sooner at an end, but, instead of standing their ground, and attempting to say any thing in their own defence, they make a most shameful and pitiful retreat to Dr. Clarke, one Emlyn, and one Jackson, and implore their protection against the cruel persecutions of truth and

and good sense, which are every moment staring them in the face ; and, having placed these intrepid warriors between them and their pursuers, they forget their past danger, their courage revives with their ill-nature, and they return as naturally into their old *extravagant rant*, as if nature and education had both conspired to preclude them from the use of any other dialect. Though, after all, I must confess that they had some cause to be out of humour ; for, it is an old observation, that nothing can have an uglier appearance, or be more provoking, than to see strong and clear reasoning, when it is not on our own side.

They say, indeed, that it is disagreeable to them to be obliged to use such language ; but that there are certain occasions where it is so necessary, that a person must, *either be silent*, or employ it ; and, in such cases *as these*, not to use it, and that boldly too, wou'd betray meanness and pusillanimity.

Oh, but the magnanimity of these criticks deserves highly to be prais'd ! to stand up for a cause, and even to triumph over its opposers, only so long as one hath good convincing arguments, or truth on their side, wou'd shew no more bravery, than it wou'd in a general, assisted by the approv'd advice and experience of able officers, and well armed and disciplin'd troops, to fall upon, and put to the rout, a body of mob, such as inhabit the precincts of *Billingsgate*, who never were taught the exercise, or knew the use of any other weapon but their tongues, but commend me to those who dare, so long as they can brandish their tongues, or their pens, without seeking for any other support ; though they see powerful arguments, many clear proofs, nay, the very evidences of the matter in dispute on their adversaries side, boldly bid a defiance to them and their abettors ; and who, though they may happen to be overcome, with their last breath cry aloud, Victory ; these, I say, are true heroes !

They then proceed to say—" But whether the present occasion will justify such expressions, or not, we must refer to the candour of our readers : " To which I give my consent most freely ; presumptuous triflers and critical bullies, alone excepted ; for it wou'd not be fair, I think, to appeal to them for judgment in their own cause.

But, lest their former apology shou'd not be deem'd sufficient to authorize their making use of such language, they add another, which, really, seems to require none other but itself to do the business ; which is, that they differ in opi-

nion from the author in regard to the Trinity, and for this special reason into the bargain, because they say, "Many persons of unquestionable integrity, distinguish'd abilities, and solid learning, (among whom, no doubt, they include themselves) who have studied the Scriptures with the greatest accuracy, and an earnest desire of discovering the truth, have thought proper to be of a very different opinion from him:" But, if the criticks had not themselves confessed, in another part of their *Monthly Review*, that, although infidelity, in regard to religion, hath had many great and learned abettors, yet their efforts in support of their own opinions, and their attacks upon religion are very far from being formidable. I could have given many instances of the misapplication and prostitution of both refin'd genius and learning. I beg, however, that the *Reviewers* may not imagine that I had any one of their society in view, in my last assertion; or that I intended to throw a reflection on any one of those venerable criticks in it; far be it from me, to lay more to their account than they justly deserve.

However, such examples as these are enough to make our criticks conclude, that the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, as reveal'd in the Holy Scriptures, ought to be question'd. If they will be so good as to prove that those persons, whose opinions they borrow, knew the right use of their reason, and for what purposes God bestow'd it upon them; I will then submit to what they alledge. Did he ever order that it shou'd inspect into his mysteries? Or that it shou'd criticise his word? Is he to be put on a footing with his creatures, and to be question'd and judg'd by it? Let me first see, if, with all their cunning and juggling, they can convey themselves into a pint bottle; for every common conjuror who has but the slightest acquaintance with the Devil, can cut capers in a quart bottle; and then I will believe that they can perform much greater wonders; but, until they satisfy me in this small matter, I must conclude that their champions were great men, &c. only because they knew no other bounds to their reason, honesty, vanity, &c.

After reciting the titles of two or three other *Discourses*, they say that they have given the readers a sufficient idea of the entire work, condemning, in a lump, near forty of his other *Discourses* on moral subjects, on account of the author's disagreeing from them in his polemical *Discourses*; and then conclude their Review, by committing themselves
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and their cause, to the merits of a little book, publish'd about two years ago, intitul'd, *An appeal to common sense*, &c. to which they desire an answer may be given; written, only, with the same spirit of candour, moderation, and free inquiry, as the said *Appeal* is; which is, truly, as moderate a request as they cou'd possibly make. But, until it is answer'd, they must beg leave to continue obstinate in their own opinions.

Now, as they have stuck their standard in this, and declar'd their cause to depend upon its being answer'd; I must inform the publick, and them also, since they are to be told of it; that, very unluckily for the author of that fly performance, and its admirers, it is now much more than a year since it was more than sufficiently answer'd, by a very worthy clergyman, in a small book, intitul'd, *A vindication of the Divinity and Manhood of our Saviour Jesus Christ; as also, of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost*. That this book is not as much read as the *Appeal*, is owing to its author's having us'd little address, and no art, in the management of his work; but yet much more to the disrelish wherewith every thing, on that side of the question, hath of late been receiv'd. However, if any man will read it through, and not childishly stop at small inaccuracies, he will find all the arts of the appellant therein fully expos'd, and his arguments most shamefully baffled.

But if this will not satisfy them, as they may pretend not to have seen the answer yet; I will answer them in another way, and in few words: That the *Appeal* is written very artfully, and represents the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as a mere learned refinement, which none but great scholars can understand, or believe: That it is written against the Trinity, by a subscriber to the Trinity; and term'd, *An appeal to the common sense of all Christian people*: As if the author had imagin'd, that the Christian people had not the least tincture of common sense, when he appeals to them against his own solemn subscriptions and declarations; as also against the very foundation on which his pulpit is erected, and the title he hath to his bread: And who, moreover, professeth himself a sincerely-affectionate member of the establish'd church on that very paper, wherein he wraps all his little store of gunpowder, in order to blow it up. In a word, that the whole, as the arguments and reasonings of it are every one old, was fully refuted, by *Pearson, Water-*

land, and many others, long before it was written. And this they will allow is a sufficient answer, I hope.

But now, as the author of the *Appeal* still continues to hold a benefice which yields him a handsome subsistence; and yet appeals, at the same time; can any one tell, whether it is his great ability, as a transcriber; or the unparalleled integrity he hath shewn, in relation to his religious engagements, for which he is so highly applauded, in the *Review*? Every person can tell what must be the fate of a soldier who shou'd have behav'd so, while cloath'd in a red livery, to the king: And is there no need of honesty and loyalty in a black one?

Yet, after all, the *Reviewers* make a flourish with this same common-placed *Appeal*, notwithstanding that its old thread-bare arguments have been so often confuted; as their *Chef d'Oeuvre*: And confess, that their opinions hang upon it, when it can scarcely any longer support itself, even on crutches. But let not my readers be in the least surpris'd at this; for it is a characteristick to the party, and one of their most usual arts; nay, rather, one of their fundamental articles; to make repeated triumphs upon repeated defeats. However, this boastful piece of cunning hath been of no little service to them: For a good face, especially in a cause that is all face, goes a great way to keep up the spirits of its adherents. The same practice was not vain-glory, only, in *Lewis XIV.* who sang *Te Deum* at *Paris* for a victory, almost as often as our armies beat his in *Flanders*.

But what, in the name of sophistry, is become of that which was lately boasted of, as the very spirit of *Arianism*? The so much applauded *Essay on Spirit*! the so refin'd *Essay on Spirit*! that the *Reviewers* seem to take no more notice of it, than if it never had a being; while they lay the whole strefs of their cause upon the *Appeal*. Can it be, already, fallen from the highest esteem, down to the lowest contempt with the party? Oh! Oh! that is true; I have heard that Doctor *Randolph* hath made all its friends and partizans not only quiet on that subject, but even asham'd of it. Poor little trifling thing! I always was of opinion, that it was form'd of parts too much subtiliz'd, to bear to be rudely handled. And will it no more come in to screen one of the many blanks in disputation? No, no; the doctor hath rang its passing-bell: And, to prevent such as might formerly have had some opinion of it from committing blunders, when

when they wou'd chuse to substitute a genteel apology, for a good answer to puzzling questions, by quoting its *authority*, as if he were still in a capacity of maintaining any authority; and to convince them that the *once great and ador'd Pan is dead*, he hath been at some little pains to make a dissection of it; I mean, of such parts as he cou'd fix; which is, by much, the smaller portion of it. For almost the whole, upon a slight touch, evaporated into its natural element: So that what remains is so very minute, that it cannot be perceiv'd by the naked eye, without the assistance of a large magnifier, although it made a pretty plump appearance once. But, such as it is, he has preserv'd in spirits, for the satisfaction of the *Virtuosi*.

Perhaps my readers will now conclude, as the *Essay on Spirit* is as if it had never been, but more despis'd; and the *Appeal to Common Sense*, the *Enfant Perdu* of the Arian party, miserably disjointed, and cut in pieces; that they must, of consequence, give up their cause, for want of a support. But let them not make such hasty conclusions: They are not so badly circumstanced as they appear to be. For be it known to my readers, that any one of their party, who can handle his pen nimbly, suppose he can't spell his own name properly, which will not be necessary, provided he be initiated into the mystery of writing off-hand, without the assistance of either genius or learning; will be able, within less than a month, to repair all their losses; so as to enable them to take the field again, with as much confidence as ever, under the banners of *An appeal from the common sense of all Christian people*, posted on the right wing; a *Monthly Review*, on the left; and *An essay on nothing*, in the centre. So that, truly and properly speaking, these are immortal, as well as invincible disputants.

Having now gone over all their *Review*, I will make a recapitulation of some of their remarks; to which I shall add a few reflections, and then conclude.

The reader hath observ'd, that the *Reviewers* began their judicious criticism with ill-natur'd and abusive language; that they have exercis'd their learning and talents, in this way, to the utmost, throughout the whole, without applying to any other means whatever, not even to the hocus-pocus of interpretation, in order to run down these *Discourses*: And, also, that their constant practice is, to pass their sentence on the author, before he is allow'd to utter a syllable in his own defence: And, after all, he is per-

permitted only to speak according as their prejudice leads them. But, I believe, the reader will readily grant, that none ever made use of such stratagems to overcome their adversaries, when there was e'er a better at hand. Therefore, if these censors cou'd have found a better, they were in the wrong to set out with these. Had they first, by fair and convincing arguments, prov'd the authors to be unsound, which is what ought to be expected from them, as they enter'd on his works, not as journalists, but as critics, and censors; it wou'd then, and not before that, have been a proper time, if practicable, to have shewn them absurd too; and, if they cou'd not correct their propensity to ill-nature, to have given vent to it, then, in low and venomous reflections. But they chose, it seems, to begin at the wrong end, and for a very good reason; because they fear'd to begin at the right one; as they apprehended it wou'd not be an easy matter to confute their author in a more rational way. But whether their treatment of the author is like to reflect any credit on better men, unhappily of the same principles with the *Reviewers*, or upon their cause, I will leave to the decision of those very men themselves.

Prythee attend to the many powerful and convincing arguments which the *Reviewers* have collected, in order to confute their author, to do honour to their cause, and to support the spirit of their party! Here follow every one of them.

They say, that these *Discourses* are wrote in a rugged stile; that their author is dogmatical, arrogant, and a ranter; and, instead of searching the Holy Scriptures for proper quotations and authorities to support these assertions, they quote from lord *Bolingbroke*; and say that the author is one of those divines whom he denominates orthodox bullies; and not one word more, appertaining to criticism or argument, do they utter. Oh! what rare encouragement is here given to all coblers, porters, shoe-boys, &c. &c. to set up the trade of criticism! as all the necessary tools are already in most of their hands.

Surely the *Reviewers* need not, however, have borrow'd such swaggering language, as they did their opinions, from others; since they have shewn themselves masters of a sufficient stock of it already; but, more especially, from an enemy to all Religion. One might have imagin'd, that they had shewn complaisance enough to their own prejudices,

dices, and corrupt opinions, to symbolize with the enemies of Christ in a thousand particulars, as they do with the Deists, without flying, also, for help to the enemies of all religion; who have, in speculation, done all they cou'd to favour vice and wickedness; and, in practice, have themselves acted the principal parts in their tragi-comedy. Such are the arguments, and such the assistants, whom these *Reviewers* call in, to the aid of Arianism: Much good may such allies do them. I can assure them, that I am so far from envying them of such, that I shou'd be sorry they were any other than enemies to us.

However, with how much patience, and tranquillity of mind, the author of these *Discourses* must support himself, when he shall hear himself publicly upbraided, and abus'd, for being a good Christian; I judge, and so may my readers also, from his own words: " — The fear of God will also arm us against the fear of censure; he need not much regard the opinions of men, who, through the apprehension of God's displeasure, is doing his utmost to approve himself to the searcher of hearts. If he hath the smallest hope of succeeding in an attempt so very exalted, he will be under no manner of uneasiness about their opinions or remarks, who only guess by appearances, and see no more than the mere surfaces of things. He will find little temptation to be vain when they applaud, or asham'd when they condemn, who know nothing to the bottom; and judge of what they do know, by prejudices so gross, and rules so foreign to reason, that he hath the best chance to pick sense and truth out of their reflections, who interprets them, as he does dreams, by contraries *."

The *Reviewers* pretend to be angry, at the imputation of low artifice thrown by the *Discourses* on their party. But can there be any thing more ridiculous, or presumptuous, than this? When the paper, in which they shew this anger, consisteth of nothing else but party art. For they will not own to have met with any one thing, in these *Discourses*, worthy to be commended; while they only blame, without assigning any one reason, for their so doing, but their prejudice to the author's opinions: And close their censures by advertising the publick, that there is nothing, either entertaining or improving, to be met with in them;

And, in short, that they have given their readers a competent idea of them. What! is the publick to judge of the intire work, from two or three mangled passages, which these sharp-sighted Arian *Reviewers* selected, as the weakest, out of so large a work? But if, notwithstanding, even these few, thus mutilated, and mangled, at the discretion of enemies, do not appear very weak; it may be presum'd, that the work, at large, deserves some notice.

Upon a review of the whole, I am of opinion, that it must reflect no small honour upon the author, to be attack'd by such adversaries, and in such a manner; and that this attempt, to run down his *Discourses*, may, very probably, answer other ends than the authors had in view. For no man, that reads the *Review*, can avoid perceiving, that the force of the author's arguments and proofs have been sensibly felt by his criticks: For, otherwise, they wou'd have shewn no resentment: And the manner of expressing it seems also, tacitly, to acknowledge, that they can't be conveniently answer'd any other way, than by low and bad language. So that there is good room to hope that these gentlemen, if their performance is at all attended to by the publick, may rail it into some attention to the authors.

It is true that the *Review*, however trifling it be, may, possibly, do this prejudice to the *Discourses*, but no other; viz. that some of those who read it may imagine, it is no more than a sham attack; and that it was wrote by the author of the *Discourses* himself, or by some of his friends, for the reasons last mention'd; and that the invectives, with which it is stuffed, were artfully thrown in to conceal the author. And this I was ready to conclude myself, upon my first reading of it; till I consider'd, that it was too full of abuse, and animated with too much spleen, ever to have come from the author, or any of his friends, for any purpose whatever.

If the *Reviewers* do represent the substance, the merits, and demerits, of all other books, with the same partiality as they have done those of the *Discourses* in question; their readers are like to have very competent ideas, truly, of the state of literature, throughout the learned world; and those who rely upon their judgment of books, will have a very good chance of laying out their money, and their time, to good advantage: But as for those readers who depend on abridgments, especially of controverted books, and almanacks of religious principles; they are too wrong-headed
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already to need the assistance of our *Reviewers*. The nation in general will owe great obligations to them: For while foreigners, the most jealous of their reputation for genius and learning, grant that no country whatever abounds more with men eminent for their superior knowledge, in all branches of learning; which is evidenced, by the vast number of excellent books almost every day publish'd here; these, our own criticks and judges, publish books to *undecieve them*. Such are the honest and worthy views of our *Arian Reviewers*.

Perhaps the *Reviewers* may take it in their heads to retort upon me, that I have been partial in my remarks on their *Review*; and will say, that I have taken notice of none other but their weak arguments. If they do, I must e'en confess the truth, and acknowledge, that I have not objected to any thing that carry'd the least appearance of argument in it, throughout their whole performance; and yet I am convinced, that however partial the *Review* may be, in all other respects, it will fully justify my conduct in this matter.

Before I conclude, I must make an apology to my readers, not only for the trifling *subject* of this paper, but also for the coarse language with which it is but too much larded, cou'd it have justly been avoided. My good intention, I hope, will answer for the former; which was really no other than to vindicate a work, that has been most basely represented by our literary judges; and to endeavour to induce the publick, and the true friends of Christianity, who, perhaps, might not have known whether it deserv'd a reading, or not, but through the corrupt channel of the *Review*, to give, at least, as much attention to it, as its declar'd enemies, the *Arians*, have done; and as to the latter, the *Reviewers* themselves are to be accountable for it. But I fear that I shall not so easily satisfy such of my readers as are criticks, for the incorrectness of my stile, and many other faults which I have been guilty of, in open violation of the laws of criticism: But if an ingenuous confession will make any sort of atonement, I am ready to do it; and, to shew my willingness to convict myself, I will point out to them even one of my most glaring faults, lest they shou'd not only consider it as an impropriety of speech; but, also, as a reflection on themselves: And this is in the use I have made of the word criticks; which, although I have introduced above a score of times, in this little piece, yet I must

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confess, nay, assure those who are truly criticks, that I never once apply'd it properly : And own that I am to blame, for giving that appellation to those who pretended to claim so honourable a title, merely on account of a presumption, which spends itself in low ridicule, ill-natur'd and ungenerous reflections. And this free and honest confession, I flatter myself, will incline such gentlemen to spare me, in other respects, where I shall be found less guilty.

Having, as I hope, made my peace with the criticks, my mind is now at ease : And as it *wou'd tend little to the edification, and still less to the entertainment, of my readers,* to detain them any longer on the subject of the *Review* ; *I shall take my leave of it ; having said enough, I apprehend, to give my readers a competent idea of its merit and view ;* by giving this publick notice to its authors : That, if they will be so obliging as to point out, to the publick, any one particular place, in their *Review*, wherein they have confuted, or answer'd, the author of the *Discourses* ; or even attempted doing either, otherwise than by abusive language, and malicious censures ; which have not even the advantage of being *new* ; but have been common, at all times, to the lowest part of the creation ; I will then become a champion for their opinions, let them be what they will ; and will not suffer them to be contradicted by the Holy Scriptures, or by any person whatever, without bravely resenting it, so long as I can either beg or borrow *Billingsgate* from them, or any others that can afford to spare it ; and will endeavour to make a jest of the fundamentals of Christianity, as well as they. Nay, perhaps, to oblige them, I may do more ; and proceed, from thence, to censure and ridicule Religion in general ; then throw up my hat, and cry, Hey, for lord *Bolingbroke*, &c. &c. and down with Religion. Huzza, boys !

F I N I S.